

Amendments to the Claims

The current listing of the claims replaces all previous amendments and listings of the claims.

1.-6. (Canceled)

7. (New) An image forming apparatus, comprising:

an image carrier comprising a surface configured to move in a preselected direction while carrying a toner image thereon;

a movable body comprising a surface configured to contact the surface of the image carrier to form a nip and to move in a same direction as the surface of the image carrier;

driving means for driving the moveable body, the driving means disposed downstream of the nip in the preselected direction; and

control means for controllably driving the image carrier and the movable body such that the movable body starts moving after the image carrier has started moving.

8. (New) The apparatus according to claim 7, further comprising:

means for sequentially forming toner images of different colors on the image carrier and for sequentially transferring the toner images from the image carrier to the movable body one above the other to form a multiple color image.

9. (New) The apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising:

a plurality of second image carriers configured to carry toner images of different colors,

wherein the movable body is configured to move with and to contact the plurality of second image carriers.

10. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

sensing means for sensing the toner images transferred to the movable body;

correcting means for correcting, based on an output of the sensing means, a relative positional deviation between the toner images formed on the image carriers; and

means for forming reference toner image patterns on the image carriers and then transferring the patterns to the movable body.

11. (New) The apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein the image carrier comprises a rotatable drum, the movable body comprises a belt, and the driving means comprises a drive roller.

12. (New) An image forming method, comprising:

moving a surface of an image carrier, which carries a toner image thereon, in a preselected direction;

moving a surface of a movable body in a same direction as the surface of the image carrier in contact with the surface of the image carrier to form a nip;

driving the movable body with driving means disposed downstream of the nip in the preselected direction; and

controlling the image carrier and the movable body such that the movable body starts moving after the image carrier has started moving.